

REMARKS

Claims 1-5 are pending. Claims 1-5 were rejected under 35 U.S.C. 103(a). Applicant has amended claim 1 to clarify that in the method of the invention, unwashed spent sausage casings comprising nitrate or nitrite are treated with cellulase and a lactic acid producing microorganism at essentially the same time. Support for this amendment can be found throughout the specification. Support for treating sausage casings with cellulase and a lactic acid producing microorganism at essentially the same time is found, for example, at page 9, lines 21-31, and at page 4, line 28-page 5, line 2. Support for unwashed sausage casings can be found, for example, at page 3, lines 2-5, page 4, lines 14-17, and page 9, lines 21-28. Support for casings comprising nitrates or nitrites can be found, for example, at page 4, lines 8-17 and at page 9, lines 27-28. The amendment introduces no new matter.

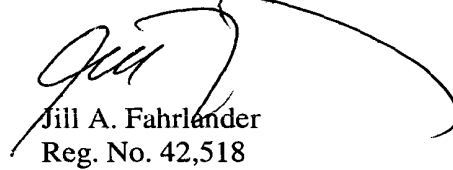
In view of the amendments above and the arguments asserted in Applicant's previous Amendment and Response After Final, mailed June 23, 2003, Applicant respectfully requests withdrawal of the rejection and allowance of the claims.

In the Attachment to the Advisory Action, the Examiner maintained his position that Applicant's amendment would necessitate a new search. Applicant believes that the originally presented claims encompass simultaneous saccharification and fermentation. However, in order to advance prosecution, Applicant has filed a Request for Continued Examination. In explaining his rationale for not entering the previously submitted amendment, specifically, because the amendments purportedly necessitated a new search, the Examiner made representations regarding what is known in the art without citing any particular reference. Applicant makes no concessions or admissions concerning the Examiner's characterization of "prior art" that is not of record, and will await the next office action before responding in full. Applicant appreciates that the Examiner may require Applicant to supplement the record with factual evidence supporting the non-obviousness of the claimed invention. However, in order to particularly address any art that the Examiner may identify in his new search, Applicant will postpone supplementing the record until another Office Action issues citing any art not previously considered.

In light of the foregoing, Applicant respectfully request that the newly amended claims be searched, favorably considered, and allowed.

This amendment is accompanied by a check in the amount of \$430.00 to cover the \$55.00 fee required under 37 C.F.R. 1.17(a)(1) and the \$375 fee for filing a Request for Continued Examination under 37 CFR 1.114. No other fee is believed due in connection with this submission. However, if a fee is owed, please charge such fee to Deposit Account No. 50-0842.

Respectfully submitted,



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